

CHRISTIAN VISION.

By the Rev. Wm. L. G. ...
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CONTENTS.

Nature of trust in God	109
The instructions of the Lord's Table useful to Christians	115
Realization	122
Human Responsibility	124
Christian Soliloquy	129
An exemplary profession of religion	131
The chief end of the Christian's life	137
Evangelical Hypocrisy	138
Christian Experience	141
Look not upwards	142
The Christian Warfare	143
Anecdotes	144

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THE
CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

Bliss ! sublunary bliss !—proud words and vain !
Implicit treason to divine decree :
A bold invasion of the right of heaven !
I clasp'd the phantoms and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace,
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart !

YOUNG.

VOL. I.

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No. 4.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

The nature of Trust in God.

Were men independent, they would be self-sufficient and have no occasion to place confidence in any other being or object in the universe. But frailty is interwoven with their whole frame. Their minds and their bodies are frail. They are weak in knowledge and weak in power. They dwell in houses of clay, their foundation is in the dust ; they are crushed before the moth. Man at his best estate is altogether vanity. The richest as well as the poorest ; the strongest as well as the weakest ; and the highest as well as the lowest, are equally in a state of dependence. And this dependence constrains every one to look for some object or being besides himself, on which or on whom he may hope and rely. But though all men are obliged to fly to some exterior object of trust, yet they very generally neglect to trust

in the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength. This conduct God observes and condemns. It is written—"Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man, that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness in a salt land and not inhabited." In contrast with such an unbeliever God describes the character and condition of one, who places his confidence and hope upon the only proper object. "Blessed is the man, that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is!" Trust and hope imply each other. Where there is trust there is hope; and where there is hope there is trust; and where one or both are placed upon God, there is happiness. It is then, our present object to consider what is implied in trusting in God. Trusting conveys an idea, which is familiar to every mind. It signifies the same as placing dependence upon any object. The child places dependence upon the parent and the parent upon the child; the subject places dependence upon the ruler and the ruler upon the subject; and every person places dependence upon some of his fellow-creatures. But though trusting and depending are synonymous terms and are as well understood as any words, that can be used to explain them; still it may be proper and necessary to point out what is implied in trusting in the Lord. Here I would observe,

1. Trusting in the Lord implies choosing to depend upon him rather than any other object. Some lean to their own understanding and trust in their own hearts. Some say to the gold, thou art our trust and to the most fine gold thou art our confidence. Some trust in princes and in the sons of men, who are as weak as themselves. Some bow down to dumb idols and trust in the works of their own hands. And it is the general voice of mankind to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Thousands set up idols in their hearts and place their dependence for happiness in something beside and below God. But those, who trust in the Lord, renounce all other objects of dependence. If they must be dependent, they choose to be dependent upon God and not on man, or any other weak, finite, dependent object. Sinners are often brought to this dilemma, either to give all dependence, or to depend upon God. For they are fully and sensibly convicted, that no created arm can relieve them. A thorough conviction of the plague of their own hearts and of the sinfulness of all that they do and desire, constrains them to give up all dependence upon their own exertions and upon the exertions of any of their fellow creatures. They are painfully convinced, that God alone is able to deliver them from the power and dominion of sin and from future and everlasting misery. In this situation they are constrained, contrary to their will, to depend upon God whom they hate and dare not trust.—Still, they would rather have God dispose of

them for time and eternity, than any of his feeble and short-sighted creatures. They feel no difficulty in renouncing dependence upon the world and all created objects. These they find to be vain and useless ; but yet they do not of choice go to God, or place the least dependence upon him, tho' they would much rather be in the hand of God than in the hands either of his friends or his enemies. But such constrained dependence on God is not that trusting in the Lord, which is mentioned in the scriptures, though a sense of dependence be implied in it. Hence,

2. Trusting in God further implies men's choosing to depend upon him rather than to be absolutely independent. If sinners could always have their choice, they would choose not to be dependent upon any object, created or uncreated ; but to be entirely independent. This is the case even of awakened and convinced sinners. They are, indeed, constrained to realize their dependence upon God ; and in this state, they would rather depend upon him than any created being ; yet at the same time, they would choose, if it were possible, to be altogether independent of God, which is entirely inconsistent with truly trusting in the Lord. For this implies choosing to be dependent upon God rather than to be wholly independent. The person, who really trusts in the Lord, chooses to be dependent upon him ; and were it possible for him to be wholly independent of God, he would not choose it. It is a real privilege to be dependent upon God ; and they, who really trust in him,

view it as a privilege to place their dependence upon him. They rejoice that God is greater and wiser and better than they ; and that they may trust in his power and wisdom and goodness. They are inwardly pleased with God's supremacy and their own dependence. They of choice place God on the throne and themselves at his footstool. If it were in their power to become independent of God, they would not make themselves so. For trusting in God implies a sincere desire to be constantly and absolutely dependent upon him. This leads me to observe,

3. That they who trust in God, freely and cheerfully put all things out of their own hands into the hands of God. They put themselves out of their own hands and commit themselves wholly to God. They put all their interests out of their own hands and give them up entirely to the divine disposal. And so far as they feel interested in all the creatures and objects in the universe, they commit these to the care and direction of God. They choose that God should glorify himself, by all his creatures and all his works. They are not afraid to trust themselves, nor any other creature, nor any other object in the hand of God. While they view all things absolutely under the divine direction, the Lord himself is their trust and their hope. The dependence of all things upon God is the only ground of their confidence and enjoyment.—Several remarks naturally arise from what has been said on the subject before us.

1. Trusting in God is the highest act of self-denial. It is choosing to be dependent, to be absolutely dependent and forever dependent. This is of all things the most contrary to selfishness, which cannot be gratified with any thing short of independence.

2. Since trusting in God implies a choice of being dependent on him, the reason, why sinners refuse to trust in him, is they are afraid he will do right. If they choose that he should do right, they would choose to trust in him and refer all things to his disposal. But they do not wish that right may be done; and therefore they are afraid to trust themselves with absolute dependence in the hands of God, who they must know cannot but do right.

3. No person ever did truly trust in God, until his heart was changed. While the natural heart remains, it will object against dependence upon God and oppose absolute submission to his will. Some have made unconditional submission preparatory to regeneration; but it is the effect of this change. Until the heart is renewed no person is willing to trust himself in the hands of God and commit all his eternal interests to the divine disposal.

4. From what is implied in trusting in God we may see why refusing to trust in him, or trusting in any other object, is so displeasing to him. It is because a refusal to trust in God arises from a desire to be independent and supreme. It is contending for the throne of the universe. This must be highly displeasing to God.

5. If trusting in God consists in choosing to be dependent, then it is not owing to the weakness of sinners, but to their strength, that they cannot trust in him. They plead weakness, but they are not weak enough. They are too strong to submit. Here lies all their difficulty. It is much easier to submit to God than it is to oppose him. If sinners are able to oppose God, much more are they able to submit to him.

The instructions of the Old Testament useful to Christians.

Continued from page 49th and concluded.

J. The old Testament gives us an account of the methods, which God has taken to carry on his gracious design, from the fall of man to the coming of Christ, the promised Savior. As soon as God had opened his mind to our first parents and assured them of salvation, through the mediation of an incarnate and suffering Redeemer, he instituted sacrifices, as a type of Him, who was to make his soul an offering for sin. We read, in the Old Testament, that Abel sacrificed, Noah sacrificed and Abraham sacrificed. These sin-offerings continued until the passover was instituted as another type of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.— This continued until the giving of the law at mount Sinai, when a vast number of new rites and ceremonies were appointed to prefigure more clearly the sufferings and death of the di-

vine Redeemer. And all the while sacrifices were offered and rites and ceremonies were observed to typify the suffering Savior, God raised up one prophet after another, to describe his character; foretell his conduct, and ascertain the time and place and circumstances of his death. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Samuel; and indeed all the prophets prophesied of Christ. This Peter declares just after Christ's ascension. He says—"Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days." The types and the prophecies explained each other and served to prepare the way for the coming and death of Christ. And these methods the Old Testament assures us God did take to accomplish the redemption of fallen men. The account of these things is to be found no where but in sacred history.

6. The Old Testament acquaints us with the care, which God took of the church in general from the fall of Adam to the coming of our Savior. He first excommunicated and banished Cain from the family of the faithful. He poured out his Spirit from time to time to increase and purify the church. He preserved the church in the ark during the flood. He pre-

served the church in Egypt until Canaan was prepared for their reception. He miraculously conducted the church through the wilderness and put them in possession of the land of promise. He defended the church in that land by a particular providence. He preserved the church while in Babylon and opened a way for their return. He raised up and destroyed one empire after another, until he gave the government of the world into the hands of the Romans. In short, he made the whole world instrumental in protecting and preserving the church, until the desire of all nations came and took the care of it into his own hands.

7. The old testament acquaints us with God's conduct towards particular saints. He not only protected and favored the church at large ;— but he took a special and paternal care of individuals, who walked before him in truth and righteousness. And his conduct was so remarkable in this respect, that it is recorded for the instruction of future ages. He miraculously translated Enoch ; and miraculously preserved Noah and Lot. He took a peculiar care of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; of Joseph, of Moses, of Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrack, Mesheck and Abednego and of many others. In such instances God manifested his peculiar feelings, towards good men and his faithfulness in fulfilling his gracious promises to them. And this account is to be found only in the old testament. No other histories relate any such remarkable interpositions of the Deity in favor of particular persons. I may add,

8. The old testament gives us a peculiar account of good men. It draws their characters to the life ; and not only so, but it unfolds their inward feelings and exercises in light and darkness, in prosperity and adversity. And this account is confirmed by the searcher of hearts.— Had the patriarchs written their own lives, or had they been written by uninspired men, we could not certainly know, that the faith of Abraham, the fidelity of Moses, the zeal of Elijah and the experiences of David, were the exercises of real saints. But since God has fixed the character of these saints, we know that their faith, their love, their joys, their sorrows and their prayers and praises were the exercises of grace. So that in their lives we learn what so many wish to know, how good men feel ; and how we must feel in order to be such as God will own and accept.

Having shown that the old testament affords peculiar instruction to christians, I shall now proceed to show what benefit they may derive from this instruction. And here I may observe,

1. The instruction of the old testament gives christians a clear and consistent view of the world and all the objects and scenes of it.— This world has been a paradox to millions.— And it must be a paradox to all, who do not see it in the light of the scriptures. Leave the hand and designs of the Creator out of view and the whole world is a perfect mystery. But the old testament brings the hand and designs of the Deity into view. It represents God as framing the whole world and furnishing it with

every thing necessary to answer the designs of the Creator. And it opens his great and glorious designs in creation. These fill the world with light and banish the clouds, which hang on the present mixt, dark and incomprehensible scenes. According to the old testament no accident has happened ; no unseen, or unintended event has taken place ; but all things have gone on exactly according to God's intentions.

2. The instruction of the old testament assures christians, that the cause, in which they profess to be engaged, is the cause of God and of all good men. It has lain upon the heart of God from eternity. It gave birth to creation. It has influence upon the government of the whole creation. It has engaged the hearts of all good men. It must as certainly prevail, as God will answer his designs and the world reach its end.

3. The instruction of the old testament assures christians, that they have fixed their hopes upon a firm foundation. It assures them that *Jesus is the Christ*. It shows them, that he, who suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, was the Savior, designed from eternity, revealed at the fall, prefigured by the types and foretold by all the prophets, since the world began. The ground of their hopes is as firm as the pillars of the earth and as certain as the world itself.— All things, all events confirm this truth. And this must afford to every real christian patience and comfort, hope and joy.

The subject, which has now been illustrated, suggests a few remarks.

1. The Bible bids defiance to all the attacks of its enemies. It is older and wiser than all its enemies. It contains instructions of the greatest importance and interest. These instructions are perfectly rational and connected with the events which have occurred from the beginning of time to this day. Nor is it in the power of the whole world to refute the instructions of the Bible. The enemies of the Bible may bring all antiquity into view and it must be silent and listen to what God teaches in the scriptures. Nothing but ignorance and folly will ever venture to open their mouths against the Bible and against God, who has revealed its precious instructions for the comfort and happiness of his people.

2. It is the height of absurdity to affirm, that any man can write as good a book as the Bible. It has never been in the power of man to give such light as the Bible gives. And all the world have proved, that no human being can produce such instructions as are contained in the scriptures. Mankind have been tried and they have shown that their wisdom is foolishness.— They have utterly failed of giving the least light on the subjects, of which the Bible gives the most rational and satisfactory information.— It is as absurd to suppose that any human being, or that all human beings, without divine inspiration, could write such a book, as it is to suppose that a man created the heavens and the earth.

3. They, who reject the Bible, do it because they love darkness rather than light. The Bi-

ble affords real and important light. But many do not like the light of truth. And for this reason they disregard and reject the Bible. There is no other reason why any person should reject the Bible, but his love of darkness and his hatred of light.

4. Such persons, as can receive no comfort from the Bible, are very unhappy. They have no enjoyment nor interest in the most important instruction; or in the most affecting and pleasing objects. Such is the unhappy character and the wretched condition of all sinners, who live in impenitence and unbelief. They have no joy nor comfort in respect to what God says and does and designs to do. They reject his truth and can find no rest nor safety.

5. Christians are in a languishing state, when they can find no comfort in reading the scriptures. This may sometimes be the case of real christians. But it is unhappy and arises from their unfaithfulness and unwatchfulness. And they must return to their duty and to the scriptures with holy affections, before they can find any real comfort.

6. Christians would enjoy constant comfort from the scriptures, were it not for their unbelief. Christ said to his disciples, who were in darkness and distress, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" He then "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." From the scriptures they were filled with comfort. And they said one to another, "Did not our heart

burn within us, while he talked with us by the way and while he opened unto us the scriptures?" "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope."

Prodigality.

To the Christian Visitor.

SIR,

I thought when I made my former communication, that I should offer only a small number of brief remarks for the consideration of your readers. But having once turned my attention pretty strongly to the general subject of christian discretion in temporal affairs, I cannot see how I can retreat from it without violence to my own convictions and impressions. The more I reflect on the subject the greater interest and importance it seems in my view, to possess. If your readers could be induced to regard what is written in the scriptures they might proceed with safety and happiness in the management of their temporal affairs. Or if the most zealous and forward professors of the christian religion would study and practice what the Lord Jesus Christ has taught and required on this subject, I would be silent. As I examine the scriptures, consider the conduct of my fellow creatures and try the spirit of religious professors in respect to worldly property by the

word of God, I am persuaded that the duty we owe to God and man requires us, as far as we are able, to pursue the subject in all the ways and forms in which it places itself before us. I now proceed to another point, which deserves to be noticed, and observe,

2. That it is highly criminal for any persons to waste and abuse their worldly substance. It is God, who puts into the hands of all persons the property, which they possess. And he requires all persons to honor him with their substance. They, who are discrete, can highly honor God, and promote his holy kingdom and the happiness of their fellow creatures by the right use of their property. They can show favor and lend. They can disperse and give to the poor. By such discrete conduct they obtain and secure honor, comfort and happiness to themselves and to their connexions. Since the right use of property is so important and beneficial, the waste and abuse of it are highly pernicious and criminal. Yet in many ways is worldly property very commonly abused and wasted. It is so, when it is expended for vain and needless diversions and amusements. It is often wasted for extravagance in food, clothing and furniture. It is often wasted by gaming, jockeying and speculation.

But in no other way has worldly property been more extensively and foolishly wasted and abused in this country than by intemperance in drinking ardent spirits. The extent of this evil has been so great for a number of years as to excite alarm and astonishment in all persons who

have not been stupified by habits of intemperance. It has been publicly and repeatedly stated from very accurate calculations, that the people in the United States annually expend more than 22,000,000 of dollars for ardent spirits. This shameful sin has so prevailed, that almost every town and neighborhood, many churches and multitudes of families, have been troubled, burdened and disgraced by the loathsome appearance and hateful conduct of drunkards. And many persons, who have not become habitual drunkards, have been constant and daily tiplers in their own houses, in taverns and shops. By such shameful conduct, millions and millions of dollars have been wasted, and worse than wasted. Six cents a day for ardent spirits are 21 dolls. 90 cts. a year. Let christian professors and every sober person be ashamed, that while many families and individuals contribute their money every day to destroy both their bodies and souls, so little property is contributed to promote the glory of God and the good of man. And let all persons believe and remember that the waste and abuse of worldly substance is exceedingly criminal. *Aco.*

Human Wickedness.

Texts of Scripture.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen. vi. 5.

The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Psalm lviii. 3.

The heart of the sons of men is full of evil. Eccle. ix. 3.

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Jer. xvii. 9.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matt. xv. 19.

Ye are of your father, the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it. John viii. 44.

The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom. viii. 7.

Questions.

1. Is there any evidence of human wickedness, except what is contained in the scriptures?
2. In what does wickedness essentially consist?
3. What is meant by the total depravity of mankind by nature?
4. Is it evident from scripture that all mankind are by nature totally depraved?
5. Can any objection against the doctrine of total depravity be founded upon the scriptures?
6. If all mankind are by nature depraved and sinful creatures, how is it that many persons in the scriptures are called righteous?
7. Why are any of mankind, or why are they,

generally, insensible of their wickedness? 8. Are pious persons sensible of their wickedness? and are they pleased with the truth on this subject? 9. Has the doctrine of human wickedness an important connection with the other doctrines of the gospel? 10. Has it such a connection with the duties of the gospel? 11. Has it such a connection with the blessings of the gospel? 12. Does the wickedness of mankind destroy or lessen their obligation to be holy and to do right? 13. Is it necessary that mankind should experience any essential alteration in their native character in order to be fitted for destruction? 14. What is the evil, that sinners deserve for their wickedness? 15. Is there any reason to hope that any of mankind will be saved from their wickedness and its evil effects? 16. What is necessary to lay a foundation for their salvation? 17. What is necessary to their salvation on the foundation, which is laid in the gospel? 18. What will be the future condition of such persons, as reject the salvation which is offered in the gospel? 19. Can any good reason be given for the existence of such a world of sinful creatures? 20. Can any instance of human wickedness be ever justified, or excused?

Remarks.

1. In view of human wickedness we may see the power of God in restraining and governing mankind. 2. We may see the goodness of God in all the blessings they enjoy. 3. We may see the justice of God in their condemnation. 4.

We may see the patience of God in forbearing to execute the condemning sentence of the law.

5. We may see the mercy of God in laying a foundation for their salvation. 6. We may see

the wisdom of God in causing the existence of such creatures to answer the best designs. 7.

We may see the sovereignty of God in the whole system of his conduct towards mankind.

8. We may see the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ in what he has done and suffered for human beings. 9. We may see the work and

glory of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of his people. 10. We may see the value of the

Holy Scriptures in giving all necessary instruction respecting this sinful world. 11. We may

see why there should be joy over one sinner, that repents. 12. We may see the madness of

sinner, who glory and delight in themselves.

13. Humility must forever be the only proper ornament for human beings. 14. Terrible will

be the wickedness of sinners, when excited without disguise by the endless torments of hell.

15. Exceedingly terrible will be the unrestrained vengeance of God upon sinners, who shall

be formed into vessels of wrath. 16. Unutter-

able and inconceivable will be the joys of redeemed sinners for their redemption. 17. God

will show the exceeding riches of his glory upon the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory.

18. The greatness of the final judgment, which will reveal the secrets of all hearts, disclose the

counsel of God respecting the human race, raise the righteous to heaven and cast the wicked in-

to hell. 19. The existence of this world will

serve to manifest the pure, perfect, eternal and infinite goodness of God with increasing brightness and beauty forever and ever. 20. It is the present duty and will forever be the duty of every human being, whether he be on earth, or in heaven, or in hell, to abase himself before God.—“*He that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*”

The Christian Soliloquist.---No. 2.

REPENTANCE.

The mystery has vanished forever. The great question, whether the bible be true, is settled beyond the shadow of doubt. As certainly as I exist, it must have come from Him, who searches the heart and knows what is in man. As I now see and feel the truth respecting my own heart and conduct ; so I can decide whether the scriptures declare the truth. The bible certainly gives an exact description of my own heart. It is written—“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” And again—“The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” How plainly I now see what I have so often been taught, but never would believe. I am wholly sinful in all my thoughts and feelings, in all my words and actions. I am altogether as an unclean thing ;—and all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags.—

Notwithstanding my outward appearances of virtue and morality and my fair professions of goodness, pride and folly, envy and vanity, deceit and hypocrisy and every iniquity and abomination have filled my heart. What strange folly and madness have governed my conduct? How could I have hated God and his holy law! O that I had loved God with all my heart and soul, with all my mind and strength; and my fellow-creatures as myself! God is ever present! He always sees me. He searches my heart. My whole life is now before his eyes. How vile and hateful must I be in the sight of God! He is infinite purity and holiness. He is altogether glorious and beautiful. His name is holy. His law is holy, just and good. His purposes, though they once filled my heart with enmity and distress, are perfectly holy and infinite in wisdom and goodness. How can such a being endure me for a moment and preserve me from the weight of that wrath, which I deserve from his hands? How wonderful is the conduct of God towards sinful creatures; and towards me, the worst and vilest of the human race! In my infancy, in my childhood, in my youth and even unto this day he has been full of goodness and compassion towards me; but I have been evil and unthankful. Wherever I have been and whatever I have done, I have opposed and hated God in my heart. And I have constantly abused his mercies and provoked his anger. "The crown is fallen from my head. Wo unto me, that I have sinned!" Can I ever sin against God again?—Can I again con-

mit what is more hateful and painful to my heart than death itself? I am afraid of every temptation; but I am more afraid of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my own heart. O Lord God of heaven and earth, keep me, for thy holy name's sake, from sinning against thee. "Create within me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—What can such a wretch do? Which way can I turn? I have destroyed myself. God is holy, just and good in the condemnation and punishment of such a monster of enmity and wickedness. With what beauty and glory will his justice shine in my eternal perdition! Now I see why all holy and righteous creatures will praise God for his hatred and wrath against the workers of iniquity. It is his holiness they love and praise in its perfect exhibition upon the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. What can I say, should his holiness render unto me the due reward of my deeds? Can I ever open my mouth against eternal goodness? Can it ever be in my heart to rise in favor of myself against the holy sovereign of the universe? Shall I dare—shall I desire to plead in favor of sin, guilt and shame against the holiness, the justice and glory of God? "Behold, I am vile! I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." For such a creature has God given his Son to die on the cross? It seems incredible—impossible! Surely other sinners are not so guilty and hateful as I am. I rejoice that they can be saved. But how can I ask for forgiveness? Never can I ask or desire forgiveness for my own sake.

I have hated Jesus Christ and the gospel of his grace. I have rejected his counsel against myself. And yet he keeps me from the endless torments and despair of hell. It is the astonishment and the destruction of my soul, that I have sinned against God. It is my comfort and joy, that he will do with me as he pleases and glorify his name in all things.

For the Christian Visitor,

MR. EDITOR,

I send for insertion in your publication, if you please, an extract from a Sermon, in which there was some notice of a religious professor the Sabbath after his burial. Instead of his real name, for reasons which need not be given, I shall call him *Prudens*.

An exemplary professor of religion.

It is probable my hearers have reason to expect some notice of the late death of *Prudens*, before I close the present discourse. Those persons, who are particularly afflicted by his death, it is believed, may derive comfort from the instructions of the gospel under their affliction. But I desire to be allowed to mention some things in his life and conduct, not merely for the comfort of those hearers, who are particularly afflicted by his death, but for my own instruction and profit, as well as for the instruction and profit of my people. It is probable that in tak-

ing public notice of deceased persons, there has been too frequently more regard bestowed upon their station and office than their real character and conduct. It is also probable that we often err respecting human characters by thinking and speaking too highly of singular and splendid actions, while important and useful actions, which every person has an opportunity to perform every day, scarcely excite our attention. But common actions form and show the character of a person. And what we account the little actions of every day God enters into his book against the decision of the final judgment and the retributions of eternity. In the scriptures God shows his regard to the common actions of human beings. He has recorded with peculiar approbation some instances of conduct, that mankind would generally think to be wholly unworthy of notice. The Savior promises a reward to him, who benevolently gives a cup of cold water. When he was on earth he called the attention of his disciples from the great gifts, which the wealthy cast into the treasury, to the two mites of the poor widow. And he is to be the supreme and final Judge of all mankind. In the day of judgment it will be known, that in his view the common actions of life form the human character. It will then be known that the conduct of every person, in whatever station he might be placed on earth, was an object of his constant regard and watchful attention. These remarks I have made that you may hear, without displeasure, the notice I propose to take of the conduct of *Prudens*. In this

notice I have nothing to say respecting superior talents and endowments by nature ; I have nothing to say respecting peculiar advantages of education ; or any high office in the town, or in the state, or in the church. Nor shall I pretend that he was a very eminent christian. He certainly never said much about his religious experience ; nor did he take to himself a high place as a professor of religion. Yet there were some things in his conduct, that are in my view worthy of notice. But these things are so small that any person can easily follow his example and pursue the same course of conduct, which I now commend in respect to him. In the first place, he was strictly and cautiously temperate in regard to the use of ardent spirits. During the whole time he lived in this town he never but once tasted of any such thing in any store or tavern. Nor would he be seen in any such place on the days of town meetings, or any similar occasions. And it was with reluctance, that he would take ardent spirits, when urged upon him as a medicine.—Many persons, who cannot be classed with the intemperate, can stand in places, where the laws of God and man are broken, and yet express no disapprobation of the wickedness and folly, which they witness. Let the temperate in any town separate themselves, after the example of *Prudens*, from the company of the intemperate ; and their conduct would be a keen reproof and a powerful restraint. But when temperate persons associate at the same places with the intemperate without giving any reproof, they afford

countenance and boldness to evil conduct. To check intemperance every person, who fears God and regards man, ought to be strictly and cautiously temperate. Such a course of conduct *Prudens* maintained in this town nearly thirty years.

In the next place, he was very faithful and punctual in regard to his pecuniary affairs. In two instances, since I have been in this town, in which he subscribed very liberally, he greatly increased the value of his subscription by his ready and cheerful payment. In both instances what he subscribed was paid before it was requested. And I have been informed, that his common conduct, in this respect, has been for many years, very exact and regular. Such conduct in every person is highly important. A failure in the payment of a single dollar may be an injury and cause trouble to hundreds and thousands of persons. One failure and disappointment cause another and another and another in a boundless and endless succession. Besides, a person, who is not faithful and punctual in his pecuniary obligations and engagements, does himself no little injury. A person's character, credit and comfort greatly depend on his fidelity and punctuality in respect to his pecuniary affairs. The conduct of *Prudens* in this respect seemed to afford him the proper possession and enjoyment of worldly property, and enabled him, cheerfully and liberally, to promote, by pecuniary assistance, important and benevolent objects.

Again, *Prudens* was very punctual in his attendance upon public appointments. Respecting town meetings you might know the proper time for such meetings by his appearance. He would be present, at the hour that was fixed for opening such meetings, and go directly to the meeting house. Though when such meetings are appointed at one o'clock, they are often not opened until four, yet he did not suppose that such an irregular and unhappy manner of proceeding was any excuse for inattention and negligence on his part. How easily might all persons follow his worthy example and be ready to open meetings for public business at the proper time. Then there would be time to attend to business thoroughly and faithfully.— Then much waste of precious time would be prevented. Then loitering about stores and temptations to intemperance and idleness and foolish and vain talking would be avoided.— Then men might return home to their families in proper season and avoid many evils, that arise from delay and negligence in regard to meetings for public business. In attending the meetings of the church *Prudens* was equally punctual and faithful. And he was watchful and careful to be present in good season for the public worship of God on the Lord's day. During the whole time I have been in this Town, he never failed but once of being in his place, when he came to meeting, before I was in the pulpit. Should all persons be equally punctual, what regularity, what decency, what order and beauty would be seen in this house of God! None would then

interrupt and disturb the services and devotions of the Lord's house by a tardy entrance. Such a habit of punctuality every person may easily establish and maintain. It is to be greatly desired that the people in this town would distinguish and honor themselves by such habits in their attendance on the public worship of God, and on all other appointments for public and social transactions. The attention and example of a few persons might easily accomplish such a desirable and important object.

Again—*Prudens* was not only punctual in his attendance on all public appointments, but he was very constant in the public duties of the sabbath. Though he was aged, infirm and sickly, he was not willing to be absent from public worship. When the weather was so unfavourable, as to detain a greater part of the congregation at home, he was commonly seen early on his way and found in his place in the house of God. Such conduct deserves attention and approbation. A constant attention on the public instructions and services of the Lord's day is a great comfort and joy to a minister, who desires to be profitable to his hearers. It shows a regard to God and to the highest and best concerns of human beings. It cannot be questioned whether the conduct of *Prudens* was exemplary, agreeable and useful in his own house.—One thing in his private conduct may be worthy of notice. He was careful to store his memory with a large number of Psalms and hymns. I am informed that he could repeat the whole of Watts's version of the hundred and nineteenth

psalm. This version consists of eighteen parts. He could repeat as many as an hundred psalms and hymns. It is useful and pleasant to have the mind filled with such things. It affords subjects for meditation, when a person is at work, or on a journey, or during the wakeful hours of night; and in seasons of pain and sickness.—What has now been noticed in the conduct of *Prudens* seemed worthy of particular attention and approbation on the present occasion. When it is considered how soon our lives must end and how important it is that we should be useful by our example after we die, I hope no person will blame me for desiring and attempting by this notice of *Prudens* to render him useful now his body sleeps in the silent grave.

EXTRACTS.

The chief end of God in his works.

What is the false notion relative to God's chief end in creation and providence, compared with the theory of inspiration? Not a few, in other respects highly informed, hold that the personal good of God's creatures was his supreme end in the creation. For they plead that he was infinitely and independently happy, exclusively of creation. But what saith the scripture? Are we not informed, that God claims the universe as his unalienable property — that all things were created for the divine purpose and glory? — Does not the scripture expressly declare that for God's own pleasure all things are and were created, and that in all things he will be glorified? There is nothing more manifest in the divine pages, than that the harmonious display of the divine perfections in the greatest happiness of the intellectual system was God's grand

design in creation, providence and redemption. The honor of God is God's object. Hence the testimony of the angels of light at the birth of Christ; for, *Glory to God in the highest*, was their united song when they saluted the attentive shepherds: and when Christ had accomplished his divine mission, he said, *Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work assigned me: now glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the creation.*

Before, therefore, this blaze of evidence that the glory of God was his supreme object in the creation of the universe, how does the false theory appear? For if God created man merely for the sake of man's personal happiness, why are not *all men equal* in abilities and advantages, and equally happy? Why are not all perfectly happy here? and why shall they not all be equally happy forever? Who, agreeably to this fond and delusive theory can justify God for the creation of man, except the Universalists and Infidels? and they make a wretched figure in the attempt.—We interrogate further. Who, on this principle, can justify God for subjecting man to any pain or labour in the course of providence, for which he will not be amply compensated? For if in the progress of endless duration one creature can ever be found whose existence on the whole shall not prove a personal benefit, the theory will fail. But we know, with the word of inspiration in our hands, that it had been better for thousands, as well as Judas, if they never had been born. And if the contrast of good and evil be not designed by God, in the course of his administration, as the occasion of the highest happiness of the intellectual system; if the ballance of advantage be not on the whole much in favour of the contrast, who can be more disappointed than the author of the universe? Why did not infinite wisdom plan better? why did not infinite goodness choose better? and why did not infinite power execute better? These are considerable difficulties, and insurmountable obstacles in the way of the false theory relative to God's chief end in creation. But, blessed be the Most High, when we remember, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, so in the case of Adam's sin, and also of Christ's murderers, and all other evils, that God has taken occasion to display and glorify his perfections in the work of redemption in the most perfect manner, we have a right to say, in the language of scripture, that the work of the Lord is honourable and glorious, that the work of the Lord is perfect. Though moral evil is in its nature hostile to all good;—though God hates it with all his heart; though it never can be changed into good, and deserves the displeasure of God forever;—

yet he, by the infinitude of his perfections, overrules it to the honor of his great name. Hence the Psalmist, with this identical object before him, says—"The wrath of man shall praise thee, O Lord, and the remainder thereof thou wilt restrain." With him also sweetly harmonize all the informed friends of God. For under the perfection of his administration no evil has or will take place on the whole detrimental to the best interest of Zion. We are therefore sorry for those who think that God can do better than he has done. For if God is not immutably and necessarily perfect, what is the rock of the Christian's unreserved confidence? What the sure and permanent anchor of the soul?—*S. Spring.*

Evangelical Hypocrites.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self flattery, self exaltation, and self confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and confidence of their happy circumstances, be as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest, when once conscience is blinded, and convictions killed, with false, high affections, and those forementioned principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false joys and comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations impressed by satan, transforming himself into an angel of light.

When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of the doubting of true saints; as, *first*, he has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a sure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true saints increase awakening and caution, and a lively sense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just, and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things, and dreadfully stupify the mind. *Secondly*, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. *Thirdly*, The devil does not assault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true saint.

The devil is a great enemy to a true Christian hope, not only because it tends greatly to the comfort of him that hath it, but also because it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of the hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him that has it. A hypocrite may retain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope assaulted by him. Satan assaulted Christ himself, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no; and the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the disciple, that is most privileged in this world, to be as his Master. *Fourthly*, He who has a false hope, has not that sight of his own corruptions, which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart, and its corruptions, as an hypocrite: and the sins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing, that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of which are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: and the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; which often cry down works, and mens own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites Mr. Shepard, in his exposition of the Parable of the ten virgins, distinguishes by the names of legal and evangelical hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such an one, in my life, that has been undeceived.

The confidence of many of this sort of hypocrites, that Mr. Shepard calls evangelical hypocrites, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immovable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a holy frame,

and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurances : but this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin ; they at least, some of them, will maintain their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways ;— which is a sure evidence of their delusion.—*Edwards.*

Christian Experience.

It is affecting to me to think how ignorant I was, when I was a young christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, left in my heart.

I have vastly a greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and more good pleasure of late, than I used formerly to have, and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The thought of any comfort or joy arising in me on any consideration, or reflection on my own amiableness, or any of my performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart, or life, is nauseous and detestable to me.— And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where, all around me.

Though it seems to me, that, in some respects, I was a far better Christian for two or three years after my first conversion than I am now, and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure, yet, of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God and a delight in that sovereignty :— and have had more of a sense of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Mediator, as revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday-night, in particular, had a particular discovery of the excellency of the gospel of Christ above all other doctrines, so that I could not but say to myself, “ This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine ;” and of Christ, “ This is my chosen Prophet.” It appeared to me to be sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught, and enlightened, and instructed by him ; to learn of him, and live to him.

Another Saturday-night, Jan. 1738, had such a sense how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty, to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God, that it caused me to break forth into a kind of a

loud weeping which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up and fasten the doors. I could not but as it were cry out, "How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had at the same time a very affecting sense how meet, and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.—*Edwards.*

POETRY.

Looking upwards in a Storm.

Gon of my life, to thee I call,
Afflicted at thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!

Friend of the friendless and the faint!
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where but with thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor!

Did ever mourner plead with thee,
And thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not the word still fix'd remain,
That none shall seek thy face in vain?

That were a grief I could not bear,
Did'st not thou hear and answer prayer:
But a pray'r hearing, answering God,
Supports me under every load.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an advocate with thee;
They, whom the world caresses most,
Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despis'd forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not ;
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

COWPER.

The Christian Warrior.

Eph. iv.—10, 20.

Jesus, my God, the war proclaims,
And calls his warriors by their names ;
" Behold your foes on every side,
Their arms, their strength, their rage and pride.

Stand in my strength ; and in my name
Put every hateful foe to shame ;
Satan with all his wiles oppose,—
Though floods and flames your way enclose,"

His piercing voice with joy I hear,
I see his face, I feel no fear ;
By his dear cross I'll firmly stand,
'Till Satan falls in every land.

My loins I gird with sacred truth,
No lie shall issue from my mouth ;
My breast I guard with righteousness,
My feet are shod with holy peace.

Strong faith in God, my shield shall be,
To quench the darts they cast at me ;
Hope as an helmet, keeps my head,
And strikes my foes with shame and dread.

I boldly take the word of God,
It is the Spirit's two-edged sword ;
With this I'll slay my stubborn foes,
Though earth and hell their strength oppose.

Thus arm'd to God in constant prayer,
I cry, to save me in this war ;
To God I cry for every saint,
That none may in the battle faint.

His ministers my prayers demand,
That bold and faithful they may stand;
With strength and zeal his doctrines teach,
And through the world his gospel preach.

This bloody conflict soon will close,
The Church shall triumph o'er her foes;
The earth shall own her God and king,
And every tongue his praises sing.

ANECDOTES.

CZAR PETER.

Czar Peter, the famous philosopher, who honoured London so long with his residence, whom Muscovy enjoyed so many years, and whose memory will ever be the admiration of Europe, used constantly to rise before day; and when he saw the morning break, would express his wonder that men should be so stupid not to rise every morning to behold one of the most glorious sights in the universe. "They take delight," said he, "in gazing on a picture, the trifling work of a mortal, and at the same time neglect one painted by the hand of the Deity himself. For my part," added he, "I am for making my life as long as I can, and therefore sleep as little as possible."

HALE.

That great man, Judge Hale, thus speaks of the sabbath.—"I have," says he, "by long and sound experience, found, that the due observance of this day, and of the duties of it, have been of singular comfort and advantage to me. The observance of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my success the week following, by the manner of my passing of this day: and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."

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